

Message Text

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2360

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDITION OF CAPTION EXDIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PEPR LE
SUBJ: ISRAELI INTENTIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON: SECURITY, THE GOOD
FENCE AND MAJOR HADDAD

1. RECENT STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI LEADERS IMPLY THAT ISRAEL HAS TWO FUNDAMENTAL GOALS IN SOUTH LEBANON -- SECURITY AND INFLUENCE. TO MAXIMIZE ITS SECURITY, ISRAEL SEEKS TO CREATE A SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON THAT WILL MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR PALESTINIAN TERRO-RISTS TO ATTACK ISRAELI TERRITORY, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY FROM THAT REGION, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING ANY NON-LEBANESE FORCE (I.E., THE SYRIANS) AS FAR FROM ISRAELI BORDER AS POSSIBLE. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, ISRAEL HAS PURSUED THIS GOAL, FIRST BY DENYING PERMISSION FOR THE ADF TO MOVE SOUTH OF THE "RED LINE," AND MORE RECENTLY BY THEIR INVASION OF SOUTH LEBANON ON MARCH 15. (DESPITE ISRAELI PUBLIC ASSERTIONS, HOWEVER, THEIR RECENT INCUR-
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SION WILL CLEARLY NOT PREVENT THE PALESTINIANS FROM CONTINUING TO ATTACK ISRAEL FROM LEBANON IF THEY WISH, FIRST BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS DID NOT TAKE SUCH KEY POINTS AS BEAUFORT AND NABATIYAH, WHICH ARE WITHIN ROCKET RANGE OF NORTHERN GALILEE, AND SECOND, BECAUSE THE PALESTINIANS STILL HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF REACHING THE ISRAELI COASTLINE BY SEA.)

2. IN ADDITION TO THEIR UNDERSTANDABLE DESIRE TO PROTECT THEIR PEOPLE AGAINST PALESTINIAN TERRORIST ATTACKS, THE ISRAEL GOVERNMENT ALSO APPEARS TO BE PURSUING A SECOND, GEOPOLITICAL, GOAL IN SOUTH LEBANON. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS GOVERNMENT'S MORAL COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ITS DUTY TO PROTECT THEM, ISRAELI SUPPORT FOR AND PERHAPS INSTIGATION OF MAJOR HADDAD AND HIS FORCES, AND THE TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE THAT THE ISRAELIS OBVIOUSLY ATTACH TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE GOOD FENCE AND EVEN ITS EXPANSION INTO AN OPEN BORDER GO FAR BEYOND SIMPLE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS.

3. IN DETERMINING U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THESE TWO GOALS, WE SHOULD CAREFULLY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THEM. THE ISRAELI DESIRE FOR SECURITY IS UNDERSTANDABLE AND THE USG SHOULD SUPPORT IT. THE ISRAELIS HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMAND PROTECTION AGAINST TERRORIST ATTACK AND THE USG SHOULD DO ALL IT CAN IN THE UN AND IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARTIES TO CREATE A SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON IN WHICH TERRORISM CAN BE REDUCED TO A MINIMUM.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S GEOPOLITICAL GOALS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD CONFLICT WITH OUR POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, NATIONAL UNITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON. WHILE WE CAN SUPPORT AN OPEN BORDER BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL IN PRINCIPLE, WE CANNOT VERY WELL FORCE IT UPON AN UNWILLING LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT VIOLATING OUR COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO LEBANON BUT TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT STATES HAVE THE RIGHT

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TO CONTROL THEIR BOUNDARIES.

5. WITHOUT QUESTIONING THE SINCERITY OF MR. BEGIN'S FEELING THAT HE HAS A MORAL COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIANS OF SOUTH LEBANON, IT WOULD BE WRONG AND DANGEROUS FOR US TO AGREE THAT THIS EMOTION GIVES ISRAEL A LEGAL RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT GOES ON THERE. IF WE WERE TO AGREE THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT HAS A MORAL COMMITMENT TO A CERTAIN SEGMENT OF THE LEBANESE POPULATION WHICH IS STRONGER THAN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT TO ACT AS IT WISHES ON ITS OWN TERRITORY, WE WOULD BE AGREEING TO A VERY DANGEROUS AND TROUBLESOME DOCTRINE. THE CHAOS IN LEBANON TODAY GREATLY COMPLICATES THE SITUATION, BUT THE PRINCIPLE NEVERTHELESS EXISTS AND SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND AS WE ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THIS VERY COMPLEX, EMOTIONAL, AND DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

6. TURNING TO SPECIFICS, TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE SOLVED IF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY IS TO BE REESTABLISHED IN SOUTH LEBANON ARE: 1) GOL TREATMENT OF MAJOR HADDAD, CAPTAIN SHIDIAC AND THEIR MEN, AND 2) THE FUTURE OF THE GOOD FENCE. WHATEVER LEBANESE GOVERNMENT EMERGES FROM THE PRESENT CABINET CRISIS WILL SONNER OR LATER HAVE TO DECIDE HOW IT WILL HANDLE THESE TWO QUESTIONS.

7. DIFFICULT AS IT IS, THE PROBLEM OF GOL RELATIONS WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS IN THE SOUTH MAY BE THE EASIER OF THESE TWO RELATED QUESTIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE ARE THREE BASIC FACTS WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND:

A. THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN THE SOUTH ARE UNDER ISRAEL'S HEGEMONY. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MAJOR HADDAD AND MOST OF HIS MEN ARE TECHNICALLY STILL MEMBERS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, OWING AND OCCASIONALLY PROFESSING LOYALTY TO COMMANDER IN CHIEF KHOURY AND PRESIDENT SARKIS, THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONTROL THEM. THE GOL IS STILL PAYING ALMOST ALL OF THE 30,000 SOLDIERS AND POLICE WHO WERE ON THE ROLLS PRIOR TO 1975 (INCLUDING SOME WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY, WHICH IS COOPERATING WITH THE PALESTINIANS), BUT HADDAD
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HAS BEEN IN AN EFFECTIVE STATE OF INSUBORDINATION, NOT TO SAY MUTINY, EVER SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF HANNAH SAID AS ARMY COMMANDER LAST YEAR. HE AND SHIDIAC ARE SUPPORTED POLITICALLY AND LOGISTICALLY BY ISRAEL, AND THE GOI HAS BEEN THE ONLY GOVERNMENT EXERTING EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THEM.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 2360

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDITION OF CAPTION EXDIS)

B. LEBANESE LEADERS ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO HANDLE HADDAD AND SHIDIAC WITH CARE. SARKIS AND BOUTROS KNOW THAT HADDAD AND SHIDIAC ARE HEROES TO MANY CHRISTIAN LEBANESE. WE ARE TOLD (MOST RECENTLY BY BOUTROS ON MARCH 23) THAT THE ASSURANCES WE RECEIVED EARLIER FROM BOUTROS AND KHOURY THAT HADDAD WOULD NOT BE PUNISHED STILL STAND, BUT HE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT BE LEFT IN PLACE. A FORMULA WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND FOR TRANSFERRING HIM. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUGGEST TO THE GOL THAT THE ILMAC IS THE PLACE TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM, BUT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE NEED TO WORK AS MIDDLE MEN IN PROMOTING ITS SOLUTION. BOUTROS AND KHOURY ALSO TOLD US EARLIER THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN FIGHTING WITH HADDAD AND SHIDIAC WOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE LEBANESE ARMY AND WE ASSUME THIS IS STILL THEIR INTENTION. LATEST REPORTING FROM TEL AVIV SUGGESTS ISRAELIS WILL ACCEPT THIS SOLUTION, BUT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE

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CONFIRMATION.

C. THE MORE PUBLICITY HADDAD GETS AND THE MORE INDEPENDENTLY HE ACTS, THE MORE DIFFICULT THE PROBLEM BECOMES FOR THE GOL. RECENT ISRAELI STATEMENTS ABOUT MAJOR HADDAD'S ACTIVITIES AND HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS INTENTION TO BUILD A CHRISTIAN/SHIA MILITIA, INDEPENDENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES, WHICH WOULD TAKE OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR PATROLLING A CORDON SANITAIRE ALONG THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER UNTIL THE LAF ARRIVES, ARE CASES IN POINT. HADDAD IS A SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUE IN LEBANON, AND DISAGREEMENT OVER HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM WAS ONE FACTOR IN THE CABINET'S RESIGNATION ON APRIL 19. THE MORE PUBLICITY HE GETS, THE MORE SENSITIVE THE ISSUE BECOMES.

8. THE GOOD FENCE PRESENTS A TRICKIER PROBLEM. LATEST ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL PLANS SUGGEST THAT ISRAEL MAY TRY TO MAINTAIN ITS TROOPS IN THE BORDER REGION UNTIL IT HAS THE KINDS OF ASSURANCES IT WANTS ON FUTURE RELATIONS BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE BORDER. THAT IS CERTAINLY GENERAL SIILASVUO'S VIEW OF THEIR INTENTIONS, AND WE GATHER TEL AVIV HAS SAME IMPRESSION (TEL AVIV 5236). WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE GOOD FENCE CONCEPT FOR THE ISREALIS, BUT THE ISRAELIS MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND THE ENORMOUS POLITICAL DANGERS IT PRESENTS TO ANY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. IT HAS GREAT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE HERE AS WELL AND WE CANNOT DISMISS THAT AS SOMETHING THE LEBANESE WILL HAVE TO LUMP. LEBANON IS TRYING TO FUNCTION AS A DEMOCRACY,

ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY HIGHLY IMPERFECT, AND HAS A LIVELY PUBLIC OPINION WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. AS WE LEARNED IN EARLIER NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT, THE LEBANESE CANNOT ACCEPT ANY PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE GOOD FENCE ARRANGEMENT; THE POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM THE PALESTINIANS, THE SYRIANS AND
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OTHER ARABS, AS WELL AS THE MUSLIM LEBANESE, IS SIMPLY TOO STRONG.

9. IN OUR CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS OF THIS PROBLEM WITH THE LEBANESE, THE KEY WILL BE PUBLICITY, OR RATHER, LACK OF IT. IF THE ISRAELIS CONSTANTLY TALK ABOUT THEIR DETERMINATION TO KEEP THE GOOD FENCE OPEN AND REPORT IN DETAIL ON EXAMPLES OF ITS USE, IT WILL BE ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO ANY PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ISRAELIS KEEP QUIET, IT MAY REPEAT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO FIND SOME FORMULA IN THE SOURCE OF THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS THAT WILL PERMIT A MODICUM OF EXCHANGES. (IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WOULD APPRECIATE A FULL REPORT ON RELATIONS ACROSS THE PRESENT ISRAELI-JORDANIAN FRONTIER. EVEN THOUGH BOUTROS HAS POINTED OUT THAT LEBANON'S SITUATION IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM JORDAN'S, A STUDY OF THE PRESENT RELATIONS ACROSS THE JORDAN MAY OFFER SOME USEFUL IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE NEXT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT). AT THE SAME TIME, NEITHER WE NOR THE ISRAELIS SHOULD BE UNDER ANY ILLUSIONS THAT THE SITUATION THAT HAS EXISTED FOR THE PAST YEAR CAN CONTINUE IF THE GOL ESTABLISHES ITS PRESENCE ON THE BORDER. UNDER CURRENT LEBANESE LAW, IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO CROSS THE BORDER IN QUESTION. WE CANNOT EXPECT THE GOL WILLINGLY AND PUBLICLY TO CLOSE ITS EYES TO FLAGRANT PUBLIC VIOLATION OF THAT LAW.

10. THE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL IN SOUTH LEBANON MAY OFFER SOME NEW WAYS TO DEAL WITH THESE TWO PROBLEMS. THE NEXT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT MAY BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH CERTAIN KINDS OF RELATIONS ACROSS THE BORDER SUPERVISED BY THE UN AND ITS FORCES THAT IT COULD NOT ACCEPT IF THEY WERE SUPERVISED BY THE GOL ITSELF. SINCE IT NOW LOOKS LIKE IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE GOL IS IN A POSITION TO ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY IN THE AREA, WE HAVE SOME TIME TO WORK ON THE PROBLEM. EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, WE WILL HAVE TO FACE THE FACT THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY MEANS SUPPORT FOR THEIR RIGHT
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TO CONTROL THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AND UNLESS
THERE IS AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT, NO LEBANESE GOVERNMENT
WILL BE ABLE TO AGREE TO THE KINDS OF ISRAELI ACTIVITIES
IN SOUTH LEBANON THAT HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR THE PAST TWO
YEARS. PARKER

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